

# **HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A **regular meeting** of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held in the Washington City Council Chambers on **August 25, 2015**.

## Committee members present were:

Chris Blake, Chairman	Environmental Organization
Chris Hart, Vice Chairman	Local Development
Larry Crist	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Henry Maddux	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)
Dawna Ferris-Rowley	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bob Sandberg	HCP Administrator

## Absent and excused were:

Marc Mortensen	Citizen-at-Large
John Bramall	Mayors Association

## Also present were:

Lacey McIntyre	Washington County HCP – Recorder
Ann McLuckie	Technical Committee (DWR)
Alan Gardner	Washington County Commissioner
Jodi Borgeson	Deputy County Attorney
Celeste Maloy	Washington County Attorney's Office
Gary Webster	Congressman Stewart's Office
William Swadley	Senator Mike Lee's Office
Brian Tritle	BLM St. George Field Office Manager
Julie Applegate	St. George News
Susan Crook	Citizen's for Dixie's Future
Lisa Rutherford	Citizen
Paul Van Dam	Citizen

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chris Blake called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

## **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda is a means of expediting routine matters which come before the committee for approval. The consent portion of the agenda is approved by one (1) non-debatable motion. If any member wishes to remove an item from the consent portion of the agenda, then that item becomes the first order of business on the regular agenda.

- a. **Approval of Agenda**
- b. **Review and Approve Regular Meeting Minutes**
  1. **July 28, 2015**
- c. **Next Meeting Date**
  1. **September 22, 2015**

Approved HCAC Meeting Minutes - August 25, 2015

**MOTION** by Dawna Ferris-Rowley to approve the Consent Agenda.  
Seconded by Larry Crist.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

a. **None**

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

a. **None**

5. **UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

a. **None**

6. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

a. **Update on land acquisition efforts – Bob/Dawna**

Dawna reported the BLM has yet to receive the Washington office's approval for the Long Valley exchange. BLM is inquiring at the highest level on that issue.

Bob reported the section 6 efforts that were ongoing have been completed. He is setting up a meeting with Greg Hansen at the state to discuss if there is enough section 6 funding left to pursue any additional acquisitions.

Bob also mentioned the HCAC received a letter from Bob Brennan requesting the committee respond to him relative to acquisition of his property in the Reserve. Since the HCAC has publicly expressed its support of the acquisition of inholdings within the Reserve and since the HCAC is an advisory committee, that letter has been referred to the Washington County Commission and other signatories to the HCP.

b. **Update on permit renewal – Larry/Bob**

Larry mentioned the permit is in place and will remain in place until the renewal is completed. If there can be a plan laid out on how to proceed in the future with land acquisitions for private inholdings within the reserve, he thinks it could speed up the permit renewal process. The renewal is moving forward, but it is a slow process.

**c. Update on restoration funding proposal – Ann McLuckie**

Ann McLuckie presented PowerPoint Exhibit 6-c-1 and hand out 6-c-2, providing an update on the UNLV assisted habitat restoration project she previously asked the HCAC to help fund. The two plots included in the project are 100 acre plots located in the Red Cliffs NCA along Cottonwood Road and in the Beaver Dam Wash. Local native seed will be grown in a nursery 6-8 months to develop root structure. Then, containerized plants will be planted. The focus of the project will be on the number of plants that survive in each plot, the impact of native plants on the presence of nonnative exotics, if certain methods of planting are more successful than others, and the most effective methods that lower overall costs but maintain high survival rates of containerized plants. Currently, she has funding from Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI), US. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and in-kind funding from BLM and UDWR. She originally asked for \$45,000 from the HCAC but is now only asking for up to \$30,000 from the HCAC. The committee agreed this is an important experimental project. Bob mentioned there is money in the HCP budget for 2015 and also money in the proposed budget for 2016.

**MOTION** by Chris Hart to allocate up to \$30,000 this year to fund this restoration project and request the Fish and Wildlife Service to increase their donation to \$40,000.

Seconded by Larry Crist.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**d. Consideration of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report**

Henry Maddux questioned if there is a way to see the recommendations for improved management from the trail stewards. Bob answered the HCP staff goes over those recommendations throughout the quarter, and there can be a list of the most commonly reported issues given to the committee with the quarterly reports.

Henry also commented on page 5, sentence one that reads, “UDWR completed tortoise monitoring in the Reserve for the 2015 season during the quarter, using funding provided by the HCP and UDWR.” That sentence should read, “UDWR completed tortoise monitoring in the Reserve for the 2015 season during the quarter, using funding provided by the HCP and UDNR.”

Henry also mentioned a couple changes he would suggest for the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve Patrol Statistics report. That report is done by the Sheriff’s office and Bob will speak with them regarding Henry’s suggestions.

**MOTION** by Henry Maddux to approve the amended 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report for 2015.  
Seconded by Chris Hart.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

**e. Consideration of Draft 2016 budget**

Bob discussed the 2016 draft budget, Exhibit 6-e-1. Members of the committee asked for clarifications on items and ultimately agreed this budget was acceptable.

**MOTION** by Larry Crist to submit the proposed 2016 HCP budget to the County Commission.  
Seconded by Chris Hart.  
Discussion: None.  
Vote was taken: All voted aye.  
Motion passed.

**f. HCP Administrator's report – Bob Sandberg**

**1. HCP revenues and expenditures report**

Bob discussed Exhibit 6-f-1, the HCP revenues and expenditures report. The HCP has stayed within budget so far this year.

**2. Tortoise mortality on Tuacahn Road**

Bob reported there was a tortoise run over on Tuacahn Road. It is unclear if it was run over on purpose or by accident. Regarding outreach, the HCP staff does educate people that it is okay to move a tortoise if it is in harm's way. The HCP staff prefers to be contacted, if possible, so they can come get the tortoise and check fencing to find where that tortoise may have gotten out of the Reserve. It is illegal to touch a Mojave Desert Tortoise, but if the intent is to move it to safety the person helping the tortoise will not be in trouble.

**3. Washington County Fair booth**

Bob mentioned the HCP staff manned a booth at the Washington County Fair. They feel it was a successful effort put forth to educate the public about the animals and the Reserve. The booth traffic was overall steady with it being very busy all throughout Friday and Saturday.

#### **4. Feral goats**

Bob mentioned the DWR found feral goats on Forest Service lands just north of the Reserve near the Red Cliffs Campground. There have been efforts to remove those, but Bob wanted the committee to know those were not the goats the HCP had grazing on Cottonwood Road. Dawna said DWR is interested in reintroducing Desert Big Horn Sheep into former native habitat such as the Red Mountain Wilderness area and Cottonwood Wilderness area. While looking in those areas at the quality of habitat DWR stumbled across a group of feral goats. Their goal is to remove the goats so there could potentially be suitable habitat for Desert Big Horn Sheep.

#### **5. Utility maintenance projects**

Bob reported the HCP worked with St. George City on a water line break on the Middleton Tank line. Also, Rocky Mountain Power has some soil sampling they are doing in anticipation of putting up replacement power poles. They are drilling in the neighborhood of their substation with permits from BLM while coordinating with the HCP. They have a consultant company to monitor the project making sure tortoises are not in harm's way.

#### **6. Statues of Confluence Park property**

Bob referred to Exhibit 6-f-6, which is a letter Mayor Bramall signed to Mike Ford of The Conservation Fund saying the HCAC is supportive of the Confluence Park property purchase. The vote of support is not a commitment of funds, but an invitation to appear before the committee to request a specific portion of the funds when a plan for acquiring the property is more fully developed.

#### **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**This item is reserved for items not listed on this agenda. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this agenda item (three minutes per person).**

a. Lisa Rutherford suggested the HCP do a movie theater ad regarding tortoise education in order to increase public outreach. Also, she suggested doing education at trail heads regarding tortoise information, if there is not already information at those locations. Bob mentioned there was an ad in the movie theaters advertising the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve that ran earlier this year and will run again in September and October.

#### **8. MEMBER REPORTS & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

a. Larry Crist would like an update from the BLM regarding a timeline on the Northern Corridor. Dawna will try to provide an update in the process next meeting.

b. Chris Hart wanted to remind the committee and County Attorney Jodi Borgeson about a previous request to continue the discussion regarding if the 1,300 additional acres that were added into the Reserve since 1996 would be available for mitigation. Jodi said she will aim to have answers at the September HCAC meeting.

9. **ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by Henry Maddux to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Larry Crist.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.